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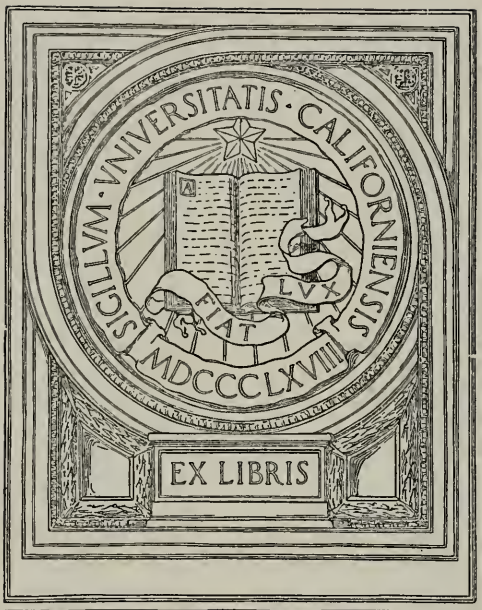
NORWEGIAN EX LIBRIS

BY

GERHARD GADE



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THE SOCIETY OF BOOK-PLATE BIBLIOPHILES

PUBLICATION NO. 2

Book plate of Oscar II
King of Norway and Sweden
from 1873-1905

NORWEGIAN EX LIBRIS

BY

GERHARD GADE

MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN BOOK-PLATE
SOCIETY, MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY
OF BOOK-PLATE BIBLIOPHILES

BOSTON
FOR THE SOCIETY OF BOOK-PLATE BIBLIOPHILES
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NORWEGIAN EX LIBRIS

The subject "Norwegian Ex libris," or even Scandinavian Ex libris, at first may sound exceedingly narrow on account of the small size of the country (the population of Norway and Chicago, and Sweden and New York City are about the same). Moreover, Norwegian book plates are almost as rare as the proverbial "hen's teeth" in American collections. The author, in an effort to use any material which might be at hand, looked over and had others examine nearly fifteen thousand plates. In that number there were only half a dozen Norwegian ex libris, although there were many Swedish and some Danish book plates.

Nevertheless, several things should counterbalance these disadvantages. First, the Scandinavians are an art-loving people. Second, some of the best artists have designed book plates. Denmark has Hans Tegner and Ebbe Kornerup with his peculiar futurist plates. Sweden can boast of Anders Zorn, the renowned etcher and painter, and the late Gunnar Wennerberg, the master flower painter. Norway is fortunate in having Gerhard Munthe, the Werenskiolds, Thorolf Holmboe, and a score of other good artists. Third, Norway has several kinds of art of her own, as for instance, the old Norse decorative art of different periods and the modern post-impressionistic styles of Munch and his school.

Although there is, as a rule, no color in a book plate, the characteristics of Norwegian art are

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doubtless present, sometimes to a considerable degree, in the Norwegian book plate.

Most Norwegian ex libris are either pictorial or allegorical. While the armorial is by far the most common type of Swedish book plates, it is rare in Norway. The reason for this is that Norway has no nobility and only a few families have coats-of-arms. The loss is not a great one, however, for although a beautiful coat-of-arms may be made into a dignified and appropriate book plate by the hand of a skillful engraver, the ordinary armorial lacks the interest which is given by the owner's and the artist's individuality to a pictorial or allegorical book plate, and, after all, the expression of the owner's personal tastes and character gives the ex libris its greatest charm. The ex libris illustrated in this small book will doubtless give a better idea of the peculiarities of the Norwegian book plate than any further discussion.

NORWEGIAN ARTISTS WHO HAVE DESIGNED BOOK PLATES

GERHARD MUNTHE

Born 1849 in Elverum. Studied in Dusseldorf and Munich. Gerhard Munthe is one of the most interesting modern Norwegian artists on account of his fascinating drawings illustrating the folk tales and sagas of Norway. He makes them unusually picturesque and realistic by accurately following the style of decorative art appropriate to the period of the scene, and, although Norse decorative art is often rough and formal, he makes it attractive by using it with singular grace. Munthe is famous for his tapestry designs, many of which also depict characters and events in Norse mythology, and, in addition to all this, he has painted a number of remarkable landscapes.

ERIK WERENSKIOLD

Born in Kongsvinger in 1855. Studied in Munich and Paris. Although Erik Werenskiold has painted landscapes, his greatest gift to Norway is his portraits of great Norwegians, among which are likenesses of Ibsen and Björnson. Werenskiold has painted landscapes, designed tapestries, and illustrated " Snorre," the Asbjörnsen and Moe Fairy tales, and the Djurklous Fairy tales. Although he has not carried post impressionism nearly as far as many younger artists, his recent work shows strong traces of that school.

THOROLF HOLMBOE

Born 1866 in Vefsen. Studied in Paris and Berlin. Holmboe was a Norwegian Commissioner to the Paris Exposition in 1900, and is now director of the Kunstmuseet. He has painted a great variety of subjects, water, country, city, winter and summer landscapes. Although every picture from his brush is excellent, he is at his best when depicting the bleak side of a snow-covered mountain, or a forlorn, leafless tree shaking in the autumn wind, and birds of all kinds.

ANDREAS BLOCH

Born 1860 in Helerud in Skedsmo. Studied in Dusseldorf. Cartoonist and illustrator for several magazines and papers.

JOHAN CHRISTIAN KOREN-WIBERG

Born 1870 in Bergen. Studied in Norway, Holland, Germany and Italy. Koren-Wiberg is head of the Kunsthaandverksskole and the Hanseatic Museum and holds high positions in other institutions. Beside being an artist of repute, he is well known as an author. Among other works he has published " Det tyske kontor i Bergen," with five-hundred original drawings.

SVERRE BRYNJULF LARSSON

Born 1881 in Christiania. Studied in Norway and Denmark. Pen and pencil artist. Illustrated " Norges Historie." He was at one time President of the " Yngre Kunstneres Forening." His head and tail pieces for books are excellent.

WILHELM PETERS

Born 1851 in Christiania. Studied in Rome and Paris. He is professor in the " Kunst og Haandverksskole." He has made paintings, etchings, and dioramic pictures of Lyngenfjord, etc.

DAGFIN WERENSKIOLD

Born 1892 in Christiania. Dagfin Werenskiold, who is the son of the famous Erik Werenskiold, has made a name for himself in painted wood-carvings. This art is especially Norwegian, because for centuries before there were professional artists in Norway, the peasant, with his strong hand and simple knife, would carve designs on boxes, chests, bowls, and other wooden household articles and afterwards paint them with the bright colors so dear to the Norwegian. Werenskiold has also made some wood-cuts, etchings, lithographs, water-colors, and drawings.

ANDERS CASTUS SVARSTAD

Born 1869 in Ringerike. Studied in America, France, Denmark, and other countries. He paints portraits and landscapes, and has made some etchings of Naples. Among his pictures are " Terrace in Rome," " Old House in Christiania," "Anarchists' Meeting in London," "Via Bocca di Leone."

ELEONORE ARBO

Born 1884. Eleonore Arbo is one of the daughters of the famous P. N. Arbo. As in the case of

the Werenskiolds and Kroghs, artistic talent runs in the Arbo family. Miss Eleonore Arbo is a good artist, and her sister a well-known sculptor.

OLAV RUSTI

Olav Rusti is an artist born near Bergen. Although chiefly a portrait painter, he has made landscapes. His portrait ex libris of Bankfuldmaetig O. I. Larsen as well as the " In Memoriam " plate for Anna Bolette Pavels Larsen are evidence of his skill as a book-plate designer.

AUGUST JACOBSEN

Born 1868 in Stavanger. Studied in Paris and Copenhagen. Chiefly a landscapist, but he has also painted portraits and has done some silver work.

O. I. LARSEN

Bankfuldmaegtig Larsen, although not a professional artist, deserves mention for he has designed some fine plates. He has one of the best ex libris collections in Norway and his interest in that subject has caused him to have made several beautiful book plates for his Dickens' Collection, etc.

Helga Ring Reusch has made an interesting plate for Knud Smith, Halfdan Arneberg for Torger Baardseth, A. M. Olsen for the Vestlandske Kunstindustrimuseum and Johan Bogh, and Smith-Hald for the Bergens Offentlige Bibliotek.

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CARL MAGNUS CARLANDER.

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"Om Ex Libris, Ute og Hjemme." Holstebro, 1913. A small pamphlet, dealing partly with book plates in general and partly with Danish book plates.

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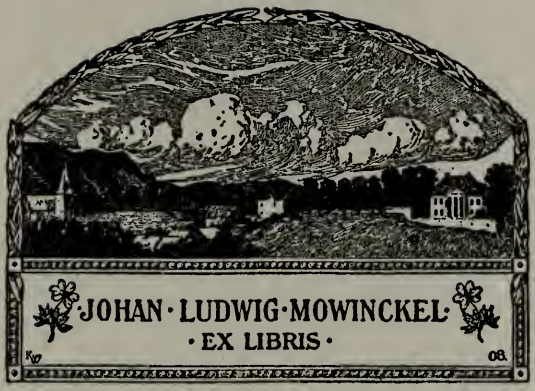
Ex libris of
Professor Haakon Scheselig
by Gerhard Munthe

By Gerhard Munthe

By Gerhard Munthe

Book plate of
Bolette C. Pavels Larsen and O. I. Larsen
by Gerhard Munthe



By Koren-Wiberg

By Koren-Wiberg

By Thorolf Holmboe

By Thorolf Holmboe

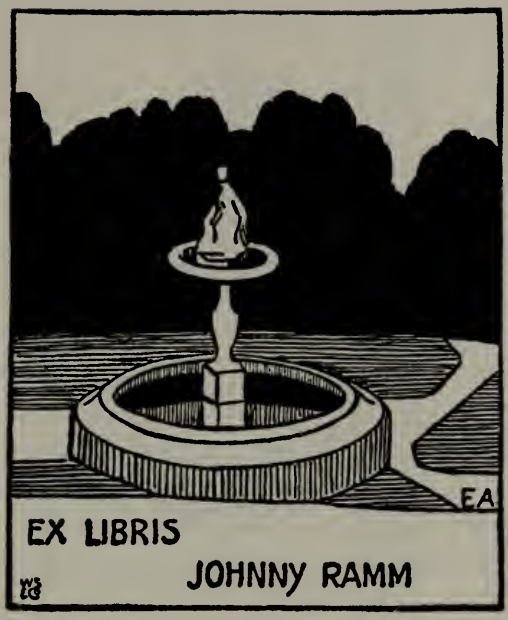
By John Allyn Gade

By Olav Rusti for himself

By Dagfin Werenskiold

By O. I. Larsen

Book plate of A. W. Brögger
by August Jacobsen



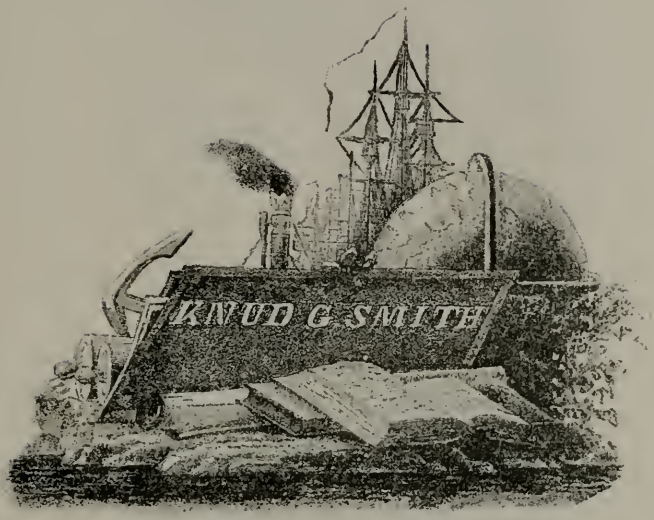
By Eleonore Arbo

Book plate of the Deichmanske Bibliotek
(founded 1780 by Carl Deichman)
Designed by Brynjulf Larsson

By A. H. Olsen

By Jakob Prytz

By J. Smith-Hald



By Helga Ring Reusch

By Andreas Bloch

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